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ABSTRACT

Perspectives of academic staff who have been involved in teaching externally are presented in three papers. In "Teaching Students Externally: The First Twelve Years," Frank Molloy examines three aspects of teaching by the external mode: preparing materials, making assignments, and providing educational experiences for students at the residential school (e.g., library tours, academic advising, and discussion groups). In the second paper, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind," Louis Moroya emphasizes the importance of effective teacher-student interaction. Since most teacher-student interaction in distance education occurs through written communications, seven suggestions are offered, including: residential schools should be compulsory for students enrolled in introductory or required subjects; teachers should provide an overview tape and overview sheet for major assignments; and teachers should explore modes such as teleconferences. "Stress, Personal Growth, and the Isolation Predicament: A Case for Self-Help by Correspondence" provides Peter Baynes' views on the need for distance education for isolated people requiring help with stress management and/or personal development. An effort to establish a line of communication and support for such individuals using both audio cassette and print form is described. (SW)

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TEACHING EXTERNALLY - LECTURERS' VIEWPOINTS

by Staff of Riverina-Murray Institute

Division of External Studies

Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education

Wagga Wagga and Albury

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

It is heartening to find that Occasional Papers is slowly but steadily increasing its readership. The original concept that Occasional Papers be an in-house publication for staff working at the Riverina and Murray Campuses of RMIHE remains very much the raison d'etre yet it is a healthy and welcome sign that Occasional Papers is now mailed to over 50 libraries, educational institutions and distance educators in Australia and overseas. Also, since the last edition was published in September 1985, Occasional Papers has been included in the data bases of the Australian Education Index (AEI) and the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). This means that articles appearing in Occasional Papers now have a potentially worldwide readership.

Occasional Papers No 6 consists of three papers written by academic staff who have been involved in teaching externally for a number of years. If there is a quality that is common to all three authors it is surely empathy, concern and sincerity towards the plight of the external student. These papers, at times unashamedly anecdotal, represent therefore the thoughts of three academics experienced in the problems peculiar to distance students.

Dr Frank Molloy, Senior Lecturer in Communications, examines three aspects of teaching by the external mode; preparing materials, marking assignments and conducting residential schools. Included in Dr Molloy's paper are numerous tried and proven pointers to successful distance teaching.

Louis Moroya, a lecturer in the School of Management, Technology and the Arts (Albury), stresses the importance of effective student-teacher interaction and concludes with a number of practical suggestions to enhance the rapport between the two.

The third paper is contributed by Peter Baynes, a psychologist working within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences in Wagga Wagga. This paper is interesting since it argues a very real need for distance education to be available to isolated folk requiring help with stress management and/or personal development.

Finally, may I refer you to the index of past numbers of Occasional Papers at the back of this edition should you be interested in requesting some of these. Stocks are depleted but limited copies are still available for all editions except No 1.

DAVID ROBERTS
EDITOR

TEACHING STUDENTS EXTERNALLY - THE FIRST TWELVE YEARS

Frank Molloy, PhD

A popular fallacy in educational circles is that people who teach Communication are expert communicators. Certainly, I don't see myself as an expert, but since the editor has gently twisted my arm, I have agreed to reflect on my twelve years experience as a teacher of Communications and other subjects to external students. I should add that what follows is anecdotal and based largely on experience. I have done no courses in distance education, nor read any theoretical works in the area. An occasional article, discussions with staff and advice from students are my principal guides. With these caveats, let me begin.

Teaching students by correspondence has for me three stages: preparing materials, marking assignments and conducting residential schools. Materials consist of various booklets - outline of the subject, notes and readings - and an immediate difficulty, especially for first-year students, is knowing where to start. We are all familiar with the story of the student who plods through the book of readings and then rings up after a fortnight asking what to do now. There is little one can do to avoid that, although ensuring that basic, directive information is in the subject outline is a good start, information on what the different booklets contain; if necessary, how they are organized; plus a study guide indicating what specific activities should be done week by week. Empathy is a useful skill to develop: putting yourself in the position of a housewife, technician or farmer who last attended school 20 years ago should lead to more thought going into clarity and simplicity of language. "Signposting", directing students what to do next, is essential, especially in notes. There is no opportunity (except with teleconferencing) to elaborate verbally, nor should we assume that because these students are doing tertiary courses, they should be able "to work it out for themselves". Irrespective of ability, everyone needs to be guided through material. And that can only be done in writing, with perhaps some support from graphics.

A related issue is integration of materials. If there are notes, readings, workbooks, etc in a subject, the relationship between the various components must be clear. There seems little point, for example, in having 20 readings in a booklet if there is no more than passing reference to them. Students should be referred to each reading in the notes, advised to look for specific information and perhaps, complete an activity afterwards. In general, students respond favourably to breaking up periods of reading with short activities - listing the main ideas in a reading, applying a theory to their workplace, testing their ability in a certain skill.

Another consideration when preparing materials is knowledge of the students. Over a number of years it is not uncommon for the cohort of students taking a subject to change, and such changes should be reflected in the materials, certainly in the type and range of assignments. When I introduced Communications in Associate Diploma courses some years ago, the first group was largely NSW park rangers, so assumptions about their experiences, access to information etc were important when setting assignments. After a year or so, the cohort was different - even those in park management were from different states - so adjustments to notes and assignments were necessary. In another subject, the majority of students used to be teachers and librarians. Now a large number are from the BA (Liberal Studies), and they are students who often lack previous tertiary experience and are tentative in their approach. Accordingly, I have added an "Introduction to Studying Literature" section to the notes and modified the assessment pattern. When revising a subject, therefore, it is useful to establish whether the student profile has changed.

Once students receive materials further teaching can be done through assignments. Most lecturers accept that feedback consists of more than just a mark, and whereas internal students can benefit from sessions designed to re-examine a certain topic, the external student must rely on written advice. I have devised a system of general comments sheets which are sent out to everyone in the subject. They can be prepared after marking all or most of the submissions and posted separately, or they can be prepared in advance and sent out with the assignment. These "comments" draw attention to common errors/misunderstandings about the question, look again at difficult aspects of the topic and advise students to re-read specific pages in notes and texts. Additional references that have come to light since the materials were prepared can also be mentioned. If these comments are sent out after marking, the range of marks can be included - useful for students to gauge just how well they did. What can always be included is an interpretation of the marks; for example, "25+ is a very good result and indicates that you have no problems in writing reports". Individual comments on the assignment cover should still be included: a student's strengths as well as weaknesses can be stressed, but the general comments do avoid making the same observation to a dozen people.

Some other points on assignments may be worthy of consideration. Firstly, with first-year subjects in particular, I set a brief easy-to-do assignment early in the semester: useful to build the confidence of students (good mark is virtually guaranteed); useful for me to establish who is still in the subject. Secondly, one of my unresolved dilemmas is structuring the submission of assignments so that students don't have a major piece due for me on the same day as an assignment for someone else. This a problem since it is hard to predict what combination of subjects many students will be doing. They do worry about being able to cope when a clash occurs and are often unaware that they can get extensions. Perhaps co-ordination of dates, at least in first-year subjects, is not impossible.

Thirdly, a more familiar problem: when to start marking assignments - when one is in, 50% in, or all in? No matter what decision is made, someone will be disadvantaged. In my case, I plump for the 50%; there is a fair range for me to make comparisons, and I don't delay the on-time submissions unduly. Fourthly, and not altogether seriously, whether to use a red pen when assessing work. A student told me recently that "research had proved" (and he agreed) that red is the wrong colour to use when making corrections or giving advice. Green is the preferred colour!

Contact between lecturer and student inevitably also takes place at residential schools. Years ago there was a belief that students should attend schools since they would benefit in a number of ways from physically being at the institution from which they were gaining an award. This theory seems to have little validity today: residential schools have to be justified, and most academic staff, I suspect, conduct them to cover topics which can only be dealt with in a face-to-face situation, or to hold examinations. But other advantages still exist: students can use the library and meet the external studies librarians who will organize a library tour; they can meet lecturers in other subjects for which there is no school; they can meet course co-ordinators and discuss exemptions, next year's subjects, future course developments and so on. Most importantly, they meet each other, and the tentative and wavering draw strength from conversations with their peers. The lecturer has a role, particularly in the casual exchanges; I always have morning and afternoon tea with students and make a conscious effort beforehand to learn names (okay with groups up to 35-40). Walking up to a group at morning tea on the first day and addressing them by their first names creates a favourable impression. Like everyone else, students abhor the "supermarket" mentality and respond to the personal touch. This can also help in keeping students from different courses together. In my experience, they do appreciate attempts to promote cohesiveness and good will within the class. Further, they appreciate assistance in contacting other lecturers, course co-ordinators etc, and in allocating time for meeting with such staff.

We do like to think that students benefit as much from doing a subject externally as doing it full-time, on campus. This does occur when they are aware of a lecturer's rapport with them. And rapport is evident in a number of ways: the clarity of materials, especially of instructions and expectations on assignments; willingness to respond quickly to queries; promptness in returning assignments; an understanding of the time commitments in certain occupations; a well-organized residential school. New means of access, teleconferencing, for example, are becoming available; so I for one would confess to still having plenty to learn about teaching by the external mode.

OUT OF SIGHT - OUT OF MIND!

Louis Moroya, BA, LittB, GradDipDistEduc

One of the inescapable consequences of teaching, especially in external studies, is assignment marking. Most teachers tend to view this activity as at best a necessary evil, at worst an unpleasant chore. And yet to external students in particular, the assignments comprise the rationale, the epitome of their activity as students. The assignment constitutes the external manifestation of their study, their intellectual effort, in effect their personal sacrifices in time and energy. In short the assignment exemplifies their role as students.

In many instances the assignment constitutes the main (in some cases the only) contact between the teacher and the external student. It would therefore appear that the interaction between the teacher and the learner if relegated to such an administrative level must have deleterious consequences upon the teacher (who gives grades and very little else) and the student (who is equally concerned about grades and very little else).

However, as the title of this article suggests, external students are in reality at an even greater disadvantage than the face-to-face students. For in not being visible they are easily forgotten, and feeling forgotten many students withdraw from their studies. This article discusses a number of avenues which could constitute a means whereby teacher-student interaction in external studies is given more consideration both from the individual as well as the Institute points of view.

Interaction and Teaching Materials

Most of the literature in the distance education field stresses the need for greater interaction between students and teachers, for example:

> "...no matter how good the teaching material may be, some students are bound to fail unless also guaranteed personal contact between the organisation and the student and that this contact gives students security both in their work and socially." (Willen, B. 1984:26)

The interesting aspect of the above quotation is that it refers to the Swedish distance education system and at the university level. Its implications for us as teachers at this Institute are

also pertinent. Interaction between us and our students ought not to end when we have completed writing our subject, nor when our students have received their teaching materials. Rather interaction is a continuing activity, which should not be solely confined to the working and subsequent despatch of assignments.

Interactive activity ought to be consciously planned and incorporated into our teaching materials. Most of us are so concerned with getting the content right that we lose sight of our unique humanity, generally eschewing our personality from coming through: when was the last time you tried for a little humour to come through the dry pages of the "Notes". Surely we don't need constant reminding that external studies involves the teacher in a didactic conversation with the student. It is precisely in such a "conversation" that the student learns best. Why not then raise the conversation a little to captivate the imagination of your students, while assuring them that the teaching materials were written by a caring teacher? For those who may feel that this smacks of idealism, let me add that external students are special people. They require all the help and security that we can provide.

Written Interaction

In distance education nearly all the feedback that students obtain from their teachers is given in written form. It follows then that considerable care needs to be taken in the way in which written responses to student enquiries are formulated and more importantly the comments made on their assignments. In this regard many workers in the field of distance education are re-evaluating the institution-student dichotomy and are urging a reassessment of the student and his individual needs by emphasising a student-centred view of distance learning. (Forster, A. 1984:35)

Assuming that the teaching materials produced by a teacher engaged in distance education are content effective and pedagogically sound; what strategies are available in order for the teacher to maximise the learning potential of those materials? In the first instance the teacher ought to have clearly formulated in his/her own mind, what exactly he/she is asking the students to do in the exercises and assignments provided in the teaching materials. However the "formulation" ought to be signalled to the students, if meaningful learning is to be the outcome of the mutual interactive process.

The following discussion will serve to illustrate some examples of written interaction between the teacher and the student. The writer is indebted to Barbara Comber for her ideas of descriptive assessment, which although of a non-graded variety, still retain some validity in general assessment procedures. (Comber, B. 1983:55-59)

In an assignment, students are asked to furnish their opinions and their analyses of a certain text. The students subsequently discover that their assignments were downgraded because in their analyses they did not include the recognised critics of the work. Rather than confuse the students it would have been far more beneficial if the teacher gave certain clues as to the kinds of written responses expected:

It could be a brief precis with questions and comments; you could include practical examples relating to the topic. In short choose ways of responding which assist you to assimilate new ideas to your existing understanding.

Using this kind of approach the writing for the student is no longer (merely) judgmental. It is part of the learning, the writer takes the responsibility for the way it is performed.

Other aspects to consider in written feedback include:

- Find something positive to say:

  "Your analysis of ... was most effective."

  "I liked reading about ..."

  "What an excellent idea ..."

- Give personal data back, it helps reinforce the idea in the student that you are also a person as well as an expert.

  "My wife is also a teacher and sympathises ..."

  "Your explanation was interesting because I had a similar experience."

- Ask questions, students' work is often fresh and challenging which deserves recognition.

  "How did you begin ...?"

  "Tell me more about ...?"

Writing in the context of the Open University in the United Kingdom, S.M. Rhys argues that the tutor when marking assignments should be balancing three kinds of considerations one against the others; organisational requirements, communication with the student, and attention to content. (Rhys, S.M. 1979:38) Obviously, this balance will not be the same from one assignment to the next. The point of the "dialogue" between the teacher and student is to overcome a mechanical approach developing in which the teacher feels compelled to award a grade according to whether the student has complied with his idealised criteria.

Residential School Interaction

The writer observed earlier that personal contact between the student and the institution is important, in providing a feeling of security for the student and equally in social worth. One way in which this desirable goal of interaction in distance education can be achieved is through residential schools. These schools provide the means for personal contact between the student and the institution and between the student and teacher. Each contact is important, however it is the student-teacher contact that is of more significance to this discussion.

On the whole, the format of a residential school is less structured and thus stands in sharp contrast to the manner in which the teaching materials are presented. Students attending these schools tend to become resentful if the interaction is not beneficial, ie, they feel they are not learning something new or useful. Recently the writer conducted a survey which among other things looked at students' perception of residential schools. Almost half the students surveyed displayed some negative attitudes towards the schools. Their frustrations at the teachers concerned were conveyed in such terms as, "he waffled on", "was not prepared", "we weren't informed about the format of the school" and so on. These students felt let down, perhaps partly because of heightened expectations that the schools would provide the necessary support structure for their individual needs. At this point it is appropriate to add that a majority of the surveyed sample (totalling 64 students) maintained that the residential schools were well presented!

In what ways then can interaction at these schools be made more meaningful both to the teacher and students? The teacher needs to devise techniques to overcome the resentfulness which students feel when face-to-face interaction leads to "aimlessness". One method tried successfully by Northedge includes the following steps:

1. individual work (note making) (5 minutes)

2. working in pairs (comparing and consolidating) (10-15 minutes)

3. small groups (4-6) (comparing and consolidating) (30-45 minutes)

4. report back to whole group (30-45 minutes).

(Northedge; 1979:40)

There is flexibility in this approach, it allows students to control the pace and direction of the discussion, while also controlling subjective reaction to the subject content until it has been objectively processed.

Conclusion

This article began by lamenting the fact that most interaction in distance education occurred through written responses by students and similar written comments by teachers, to these responses. Unfortunately, in the foreseeable future these written responses, of both kinds, will continue to be the main medium of interaction in distance education. It is up to us as teachers to vary this interactive process and to make it more meaningful to our students. Hence, with a view to engaging further comment on this vital topic, the writer would like to draw his readers' attention to a number of suggestions which they may deign to consider.

Suggestion One

Residential schools be compulsory for students enrolled in introductory or compulsory subjects.

Suggestion Two

Teachers be encouraged to provide an introductory tape, especially for compulsory subjects, thereby providing students with more personalised interaction.

Suggestion Three

Teachers be encouraged to provide a class-wide overview sheet, for each major assignment, thereby informing students of common difficulties, range of marks, etc.

Suggestion Four

Teachers explore other modes of teaching externally such as teletutorials, teleconferences, computer marked assignments.

Suggestion Five

Teachers attempt to contact all students personally at the start of each semester to introduce themselves, show interest and give encouragement.

Suggestion Six

Redesign the assignment cover, so that students have a means of informing their teacher on aspects of the assignment.

Suggestion Seven

Teachers spend as much time preparing for and teaching external students as they do for internal students.

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1. Willen, B. "Review" Newsletter, ASPESA, Vol 10, No 2, 1984, pp.25-27.

2. Forster, A. Unit 6, G.Dip. in Dist.Educ., SACAE, 1984, p.35.

3. Comber, B. "Writing back to Writers: a tertiary experience", English in Australia, No 66, Dec 1983, pp.55-59.

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STRESS, PERSONAL GROWTH AND THE ISOLATION PREDICAMENT

A CASE FOR SELF-HELP BY CORRESPONDENCE

Peter Baynes, STL, BA

Summary

This paper offers some reflections on the predicament of isolated individuals in need of help with stress management and/or personal development. In addition, it discusses an attempt by the writer to establish a line of communication and support for such individuals. This took the form of a course in both audio cassette and print form. Participants were encouraged to provide frequent feedback to the lecturer as they worked through the course.

Like the Moliere character who discovers he has been speaking prose all these years, I find that my Continuing Education activities over the past eight years or so have actually been explorations of a problem in Australian distance education. This problem is important but does not seem to have been seriously addressed, if one can judge from the health care and education structures presently in place. Although my area of specialization is psychology rather than distance education - in which I claim no expertise - I hope the observations which follow may be of some interest.

The Problem

The problem has to do with the stress management and personal development needs of people suffering from one or both of two very Australian conditions: the 'tyranny of distance', and what might be called the 'tyranny of the group mind'.

The dimensions of the problem will become clearer if we consider in concentric circle fashion whose problem it is. In the first instance, it belongs to anyone who needs psychological help but is effectively denied it because of distance and/or group pressure. Also to be included here are the sufferer's relatives and friends, who may be too close to the problem, or too much part of it, to offer acceptable help. In the second instance, the problem also belongs to the nearest helping professionals, who will often not be approached for reasons of distance or group attitudes. Even if approached, perhaps most helping professionals would feel unable, for reasons of time and/or training, to take on sustained involvement with psychotherapy or 'personal growth'.

In the third instance, of course, the problem belongs to the local community, however large or small: the community has much to lose (and even more to gain) from the way it responds to the needs of a member in crisis.

Crisis? What Crisis?

Our laconic and outwardly-directed culture does not encourage attention to inner crises. Not without reason, it prefers to reserve the term 'crisis' for problems that are visible, a threat to the material welfare of many people, and capable - at least in principle - of being solved by the right practical measures. In all these respects, inner crises must seem unreal, self-indulgent, and at best of low priority. Perhaps this philosophy is preferable to the narcissistic excesses we identify with California, but its human cost is appalling. Some of the most widely publicised costs are: alienation, meaninglessness, and despair; the 'levelling' of individual talent and excellence; the repression of sensitivity and emotional expression; futile and unrewarding 'busy-ness'; stylised and superficial communi-cation even in intimate relationships; and perhaps above all, fear and ignorance of one's own mind. It seems that the perennial human search for self-knowledge and self-realization can be cheerfully dispensed with when seeking happiness the Australian way.

What, then, is an 'inner crisis'? There is no simple litmus test, but I think it is reasonable to apply the expression to problems of stress and/or personal development which represent a potential turning point in one's life. Turning points are not always recognisable when they occur, but they do give certain telltale signs. Assuming that most of us have our feet set firmly by habit and need in one particular life direction, any substantial deviation is likely to cause a mixture of anxiety, confusion, self-doubt, fear of loss, and perhaps even some unaccountable sadness. But changing direction is not just saying goodbye to what feels secure and familiar: it is exposing oneself to new possibilities. So the telltale signs also include the stirring of excitement, new questions and new hope.

Implicit in this view of inner crises is the belief that stress and personal development are intimately connected. Stress is not just a negative experience, to be avoided when possible, and 'managed' when not. It is by definition (eg, Selye, 1976) the non-specific response of the body to environmental demands of any kind, whether pleasant or unpleasant. In other words, stress means change, and the effort to adapt to change. It is central to the changes involved in 'personal growth', and is probably indispensable as a source of 'leverage' for change.

Crises of Stress

Typical of the stress crises I have in mind are the breakdown of a long-standing relationship by which both partners have defined themselves and their place in the scheme of things. This is painful enough when those involved are to some extent protected by the anonymity of a large city and sympathetic, non-judgmental friends. It can of course be nightmarish when it happens to well-known identities in a small farming community. Here, attitudes are likely to be less understanding. Indeed, there is a much greater danger that people will gossip, take sides, pass moral judgment, even ostracise one or both partners. This is understandable in view of the greater personal involvement of the community in the personal lives of the distressed couple - an involvement which will often extend to networks of inter-relationship by marriage, and may be complicated by inter-clan sensitivities reaching back over generations. No doubt this situation is all too familiar to readers experienced in the ways of country living.

The stress problem I have described is highly visible. What is not so visible is the emotional chaos into which the couple has been plunged, or the gradual undermining of their mental and physical health if the crisis continues unresolved. Less visible still, but probably more widespread, is the suffering of couples who stay locked in a relationship of mutual destruction and misery because the consequences of breaking up seem even worse.

From the tip of the iceberg, we have been moving down to progressively more massive but less visible levels of relationship stress. At each level, the stress is also a potential turning point which, though frightening at the time, may be looked on in retrospect as the beginning of creative new directions. This brings us to what ideally is the flipside of stress: personal 'growth' or transformation.

Crises of 'Personal Growth'

It follows that there is no physical or social situation that stands as an unambiguous example of a personal growth crises: everything depends on what is happening at the psychological level. It may, however, be helpful to list some situations that often seem to be occasions for dramatic personal change. One would hope, for example, that there is a good chance of personal growth from becoming involved in a 'growth group' of some kind. There is probably an even better chance when one abandons a successful career in mid-life because it has come to seem pointless - but any variant of the mid-life crisis might do as well. Then there is the husband or wife who develops absorbing new interests and skills while the other partner fails to change; or the enthusiastic convert to some potentially transforming activity, whether it be jogging, voluntary work in the community, Yoga, keeping a dream diary or engaging seriously in a spiritual practice such as meditation.

Self-help for the Isolated

When a stress or personal growth crisis is complicated by the problems of geographical or cultural isolation already described, the best - if not the only - option may be self-help. This has the advantage of making one take full responsibility for one's life, which in itself can be a liberating experience. The problem is what precisely one should be doing in order to help oneself. At this point, many people will benefit from a source of self-help which sets out some well-tried options and tells them what to expect. It was with this need in mind about five years ago that I put together a correspondence course on stress and personal development.

Self-help by Correspondence?

The rationale for the course was presented as follows:

> "At first sight it might seem unlikely that a correspondence course could provide the skills and experiences needed to deal with stress or enhance personal development. On the other hand, it often seems that help is least available to those who would most benefit from it. A correspondence course has the great advantage of total availability and convenience. It overcomes the problems involved in joining a group, protecting one's own privacy, and keeping up physical attendance at classes. It may also cushion one from the usual Australian prejudices, which often lead even relatives and friends to engage in well-meaning sabotage... Those who lack the knowledge or time or resources to search out (a competent and compatible teacher) may appreciate a correspondence course offering a critical evaluation of the most promising approaches to managing stress and enhancing personal development."

The course consisted of eight units in both print and audio cassette form, supported by a book of readings. The emphasis was on experiential exercises known to be capable of relieving stress and fostering personal growth. Participants were given 'Contact Assignments' at various points in the course. Although these could not be imposed as obligatory, it was hoped that they would provide much-needed individual feedback which could be a basis for more personalised help and for making changes in course content where necessary.

Response to the course has been on the whole encouraging, given the difficulty of making its existence known where it might be most needed, the novelty of the concept, the considerable cost ($70) and the lack of opportunity to inspect before buying. Feedback has taken the form of sustained correspondence with a sizable minority of participants who responded to the Contact Assignments. Most student comments have been supportive and appreciative.

Deficiencies in the Existing Self-help Literature

The self-help correspondence course invites comparison with existing offerings in the form of self-help books on coping with stress. It is a moot point whether the authors of such books - however competent and well-intentioned - can discharge their ethical responsibilities to a diverse, anonymous and often isolated readership. In addition, they are usually written from a relatively narrow and often impoverished theoretical standpoint, and neglect the developmental context of stress. There is unfortunately at present a bandwagon effect in popular writings on stress, with the inevitable trivialization that this involves.

My hope in developing a self-help correspondence course was to offer worthwhile help to people - especially to isolated people - willing to engage in a serious search for answers but unsure where to look or whom to trust. Any discussion of the ideas I have presented, criticisms and alternative suggestions would be most welcome.

Reference

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Edward Reid-Smith, "Results of a Survey of Residential Schools held by Riverina College, September 1980".

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